DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 376 265 UD 030 179

TITLE Needs Assessment: Quality Care for African American Children.

INSTITUTION African American Child Care Task Force, Seattle, WA.; Black Child Development Inst., Seattle, WA.; National Black Child Development Inst., Inc., Washington, D.C.

PUB DATE 92
NOTE 38p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Blacks; *Child Caregivers; Child Development; Children; Cultural Awareness; *Day Care; Day Care Centers; Early Childhood Education; Futures (of Society); Government Role; *Needs Assessment; *Parent Participation; Safety; Self Esteem; Special Needs Students; Staff Development; Surveys; Urban Problems; Well Being
IDENTIFIERS African Americans; Washington (King County); *Washington (Seattle)

ABSTRACT

A needs assessment was conducted to determine the needs of the Seattle (Washington) community for child care for African-American children. There were 40,194 licensed child-care slots in King County, Seattle's county, in 1990, but it was estimated that 75,000 children needed child-care services. Almost half probably needed child-care subsidies, but less than 5,000 actually received them through governmental programs. A survey of 173 programs, a more detailed study of 50 programs, and interviews with 34 center owners, directors, and program supervisors (including some home-day-care providers) resulted in the formulation of recommendations for child-care services in the Seattle area. Recommendations are given in the areas of (1) self-esteem and cultural awareness; (2) parental involvement; (3) environment and safety; (4) discipline; (5) staffing and staff development; (6) management and administration; (7) curriculum; and (8) community resources. An action agenda is defined to bring about recommendations in these areas. (Contains 21 references.) (SLD)

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NATIONAL
BLACK
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DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTE, INC.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

QUALITY CARE FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILD CARE TASK FORCE

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MESSAGE FROM THE BCDI-SEATTLE AFFILIATE

Dear Child Care Advocate,

The National Black Child Development Institute was founded in 1970 to improve the quality of life for African American children. NBCDI focuses primarily on health, child welfare, education, and child care/early childhood education by monitoring public policy issues and educating the public. BCDI-Seattle is part of the NBCDI network of 42 affiliates which provide direct services to Black children and youth and are dedicated to making children and their families this nation's number one priority.

Recognizing the importance of early childhood development, the Seattle affiliate and the African American Child Care Task Force formed a working partnership to address the need for comprehensive child care services. Our work was informed by the NBCDI report, *Safeguards: Guidelines for Establishing Programs for Four Year Olds in the Public Schools*, which details ten standards for providing quality early childhood services to African American children. It is our goal to create, strengthen, and expand culturally relevant child care programs that are safe, affordable, accessible, and of high quality, particularly for low-income African American families.

We are grateful to the Community Service Division of the King County Department of Human Services which funded the Needs Assessment Study of Child Care for African American Children as well as the development of this report, and the Foundation for Child Development which also provided funding for the final publication.

The Seattle affiliate believes this report is a valuable resource for child care advocates like yourself. The information presented will assist you in the formulation of policy and the establishment of guidelines for funding, regulatory standards, staffing, training, curriculum, parental involvement and the delivery of comprehensive family services. Collectively, we can eliminate the unacceptable gap between available child care services and the type of coordinated child care services needed to ensure the healthy growth and positive development of African American children.

Who, if not us, will be responsible for our children?

Yvonne Ervin Carr, President
BCDI-Seattle

MESSAGE FROM THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILD CARE TASK FORCE

Dear Friend,

The African American Child Care Task Force is a group of professionals working in the field of child care and early childhood education who came together to identify and begin to address many troubling issues relating to child care for African American children. The specific concerns are:

Self-Esteem/Cultural Awareness
Parental Involvement
Environment/Safety
Discipline
Staffing/Staff Development
Management/Administration
Curriculum
Community Resources

Based upon these concerns, the Task Force agreed that a base of information was needed about those child care programs which serve large numbers of African American children. While research shows that African American children are more likely to be damaged by low quality services, it also shows that they tend to benefit more from high quality services which promote their physical, social, emotional, cultural, and cognitive development. Therefore, the Task Force undertook a needs assessment to identify and build upon the positives which already exist.

The disproportionately negative socio-economic condition of African Americans provides the context for understanding the critical need for high quality early education for African American children. Thus, the foundation for the assessment was not any particular study, but our own history as African Americans. Based on our history, we already know that many of the answers that we need are within us. The assessment was simply one vehicle to externalize and share those solutions.

The findings, discussions, recommendations, and Action Agenda presented in this report challenge you to scrutinize the existing policies, funding guidelines, and regulatory standards of child care delivery systems.

Sandria Woods-Pollard, Founder
African American Child Care Task Force

NBCDI'S STAND ON CHILD CARE

The National Black Child Development Institute believes that the availability of developmental child care promotes and strengthens the well-being of children and their families. By developmental child care, we refer to programs which seek to look at the "total needs" of the child and the family.

Quality child care must be available to all families in need of such services at prices which families can afford. Every child is entitled to a child caring experience that is developmentally appropriate to the age of the child and which meets the social and economic needs of the family. Such care must:

1. recognize stages of growth and development in children;

2. provide stimulating experiences designed to facilitate cognitive, social, physical, cultural, and emotional development;

3. attend to the health and nutrition needs of children; and

4. promote nurturing and supportive responses to children.

Incremental changes in existing child care policy must be pursued which will increase public and private support for child care services until such time as a national comprehensive child development program is secured. A national program should:

- facilitate the provision of child care in diverse facilities such as churches, family day care homes, full- and half-day center-based programs, and after-school and summer programs for school-aged children;

- provide health and nutritional services for optional use by consumers;

- include a strong parental involvement component in the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of programs, as well as in the provision of services;

- address the need for child care services in each state for infants, preschoolers, and school-aged children, with special attention given to meeting the needs of victims of neglect and abuse, children of teenage parents, homeless children, and handicapped children;

- coordinate all federal programs which support the delivery of child care services;

- require that child care providers participate in training programs which lead to formal assessment and credentialing such as the Child Development Associate National Credentialing Program (CDA); and

- promote the development and enforcement of state and local licensing standards to ensure the health and safety of children in out-of-home care.

In the absence of a comprehensive national policy, state and local policy should embrace the concept of developmental care through the enactment of programs and policy initiatives which meet the applicable aforementioned goals.

SECTION I. BACKGROUND ON THE COMMUNITY

The City of Seattle is located in King County, Washington State. According to the 1990 Census, the total population of King County is 1,507,319. Its racial composition is 85.4% Caucasian, 4.8% African American, 6.4% Asian/Pacific Islander, 2.9% Hispanic, 1% Native American, and 2.4% other races.

Almost 70% of the 76,289 African Americans in King County -- 51,948 individuals -- reside in the City of Seattle, where they represent 11% of the population of the city. The mean annual income of African American households in King County is $29,574, compared to $46,269 for white families.

Poverty rates are high among King County's African American children. More than one third (35.7%) of African American children ages birth to four live in poverty, compared to 7% of their white counterparts; 34.3% of African American five-year-olds are in poverty, compared to 7.6% of white five-year-olds; and 28.9% of African American children ages six to eleven live in poverty, compared to 6.3% of white children in that age group.

Community Institutions

The major governmental bodies in Seattle are the Mayor's office, the City Council, and Community Councils. Seattle's mayor, the chief administrator for the city, is elected for a four-year term. Currently Norman Rice, an African American, holds this office. The City Council is the legislative body which operates independently of the mayor. The nine council members serve four-year terms which are staggered, and all of its offices are nonpartisan. Each neighborhood in Seattle has a Community Council which reports to the City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods. The Councils act in an advisory capacity and form coalitions as needed to address specific community issues.

Major businesses in the City of Seattle include: Group Health Cooperative, Paccar, Weyerhauser, Nordstrom, Security Pacific Bank, US West, Safeco, Washington Mutual Savings Bank, Burlington Northern, Airborne Freight, and Alaska Air. One of the largest local employers is the Boeing Corporation, which has been in Seattle for 80 years.

The major universities and colleges that offer programs in education or early childhood education include the University of Washington, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle University, North Seattle Community College,

South Seattle Community College, Central Seattle Community College, and Shoreline Community College. Seattle University offers an Early Childhood Education Track within the Masters in Teaching Program, and the four community colleges each offer an early childhood education program. In addition, King County has two on-site early childhood training programs for child care professionals at Renton Technical College and Lake Washington Technical College.

Seattle has two major city newspapers, the *Seattle Times* and the *Seattle Post Intelligencer*. It also has three African American newspapers, the *Seattle Medium, The Scanner,* and *The Facts*. There are four television stations (one educational), and twenty-six AM and FM radio stations.

Black churches are among the most significant institutions within Seattle's African American community. Some churches provide full-day, on-site child care for the community they serve as well as space for training early childhood professionals.

Health

Children in Central Seattle -- where a large number of African Americans reside -- disproportionately experience factors which negatively affect health status:

- the highest proportion of households living in poverty
- higher ratios of uninsured and Medicaid hospital admissions
- the highest percentage of births to unmarried women and teen mothers
- the largest share of births to women receiving inadequate prenatal care
- higher proportions of low birthweight

Central Seattle is also experiencing the highest infant mortality rates in the state. During the 1980s, white infant mortality in Washington declined from a rate of 12 to 9 per 1,000 live births. For African Americans, the rate increased from 13.3 to 16.2 per 1,000. Seattle had the highest rate in the state: 24.8 per 1,000. Nationwide, the African American infant mortality rate was 17.9 in 1987, compared to 8.6 for whites.

Although Seattle has a network of strategically located community health centers, most of them cannot offer comprehensive services on-site. In Central Seattle, community health services are especially fragmented, and most low-income families cannot receive care in a single location.

In the fall of 1991, the City of Seattle received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to form a "Seattle Child Health Project," with

responsibility for coordinating the Strategy for Child Health Coalition. The Strategy for Child Health is designed to increase the effectiveness of health services for children through a series of improvements in health surveillance, service delivery, financing, and case management, carried out during a three-year period.

Education

In 1991, the Seattle Public School System was reorganized as a budget-cutting measure. Currently, the State Legislature sets the maximum amount of school levy that can be assessed. The Mayor and the school board have been lobbying for a needs assessment factor to be added to levy limits. It is hoped that with a larger levy limit, Seattle can overcome its school budget problem.

African Americans have dramatically increased high school completion rates over the last decade. However, this population still has the highest school dropout rate among the five major ethnic groups in Washington State. Achievement test scores for African American students range from 20 to 45 points below their white counterparts. In the Seattle Public Schools, African Americans experience the lowest achievement scores and the highest number of disciplinary actions of the major ethnic groups.

Nationally, higher education participation rates -- that is, individuals attending colleges and universities -- increased for African Americans between 1970 and 1975. Since then, they have not changed. However, there has been a decline in the proportion of African Americans actually completing their programs and receiving degrees. In Washington State, the number of bachelor's degrees conferred upon African Americans declined by 25% between 1983 and 1987 (276 and 207, respectively). Between 1980 and 1988, African Americans experienced a 49% decline in public graduate and professional enrollment.

Child Care

There were 40,194 licensed child care slots in King County as of 1990. However, it is estimated that 75,000 children need child care services. It is also estimated that almost half of these children may need child care subsidies, but currently less than 5,000 actually receive such assistance through the governmental child care subsidy programs in King County.

Furthermore, children who are enrolled in Head Start and the State's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) receive care 2 1/2 - 3 hours per day for 128 days a year. For working parents, or for

parents who desire to work, these hours represent a barrier to full employment.

In Seattle, the following funding streams provide child care subsidy:

- Washington State Department of Social and Health Services
- King County Department of Human Services, Comprehensive Child Care Program
- City of Seattle Department of Housing and Human Services, Child Care Program
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Private Industry Council (PIC) Job Training and Partnership Act and Family Support Act
- United Way

African Americans comprise 20% to 50% of the children receiving assistance from the three major governmental child care subsidy programs in King County: King County Child Care Program, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, and City of Seattle Comprehensive Child Care Program.

SECTION II. DATA & INFORMATION GATHERING

The Seattle affiliate of the National Black Child Development Institute, in cooperation with the African American Child Care Task Force, developed four principles or goals to guide the process of conducting the needs assessment and generating community recommendations. These goals are:

1. To identify needs and barriers to quality services of those child care providers who serve significant numbers of African American children.

2. To identify program strengths on which to build quality early childhood services for African American children.

3. To recognize exemplary early childhood practices which promote the development of African American children.

4. To empower members of the African American child care community, individually and collectively, to specify the strategies which best nurture the development of African American children.

The Needs Assessment Project consists of five major components:

- Survey of Child Care Providers
- Curriculum Consultation
- Child Care Summit
- Community Forum
- Release of the *Needs Assessment Report*

Each component represents an important aspect in developing comprehensive child care services. Special emphasis is placed on designing, enhancing, and increasing culturally relevant child care programs, particularly for low-income African American families.

Survey Development & Implementation Process

IMPACT Communications conducted a comprehensive analysis designed to provide data on the quality of child care programs serving African American children. Toward that end, early childhood professionals were interviewed on-site, utilizing an 11-page questionnaire with 100 measurable items. These personal interviews averaged two hours each.

The Child Care Licensers at Region IV Division of Children and Family Services identified 173 licensed child care programs in King County who

serve African American children. All 173 programs were sent a letter inviting their participation in the Needs Assessment Project. Fifty programs were selected where African American children constituted at least 25% of the total population. These programs represented a variety of child care services in the community (i.e., center-based, family child care homes, and non-residential mini-centers).

The preliminary results of the survey reflect the findings generated from 34 interviews with owners, directors, and program supervisors at 34 programs. Survey findings are organized into eight focus areas:

Self-Esteem/Cultural Awareness
Parental Involvement
Environment/Safety
Discipline
Staffing/Staff Development
Management/Administration
Curriculum
Community Resources

The definitions, guidelines, and performance criteria for each of the focus areas were developed using the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. The National Black Child Development Institute's "Safeguards" standards for early childhood education programs provided the context for data analysis and the development of recommendations.

The use of focus areas facilitated a systematic approach for gathering and studying survey information. It also provided a clear structure for presenting the recommendations and implementation phase of the Needs Assessment Project.

Curriculum Consultation

Quality child care is directly related to a number of factors, including class size, child/staff ratios, and the physical environment. However, among the most important factors is teacher education and training. Many early childhood professionals face numerous barriers to continuing their education. These obstacles include limited financial resources, work schedules that conflict with class times, and the lack of available substitute early childhood professionals. All of these barriers are magnified in the African American community.

To help address the need for training opportunities as well as provide an incentive for participation in the Needs Assessment Project, on March 6, 1991, participating early childhood professionals had an opportunity to attend a special consultation. To ensure participation by the early childhood professionals, substitute reimbursement was made available.

Dr. Janice E. Hale, a nationally recognized authority on the early education and child care needs of African American children, was the presenter. The consultation, "Implementing Curriculum Programs for African American Children," explored the rationale for instituting a culturally diverse program and outlined the specifics for successfully implementing the program.

Dr. Hale presented the three-year curriculum which she developed as President of Visions for Children, a model child care program in Cleveland, Ohio. In Dr. Hale's model, African American culture is integrated throughout the curriculum to teach cognitive skills while strengthening self-esteem and African American identity. The curriculum is organized around five skill areas: physical (manipulatives, motor development), communication, creativity, inquiry (science, math, computers, health), and culture. Emphasized are hands-on activities, family participation, human interaction, open space to maximize movement, social skills, and the meaningful contributions of African Americans and Africans. Dr. Hale's curriculum materials include daily activity plans, monthly planning forms, monthly themes (such as family, seasons, animals, Black History, Africa), heroes and "sheroes," and field trips.

In addition to the verbal presentation of the curriculum, the consultation included a video presentation, question-and-answer session, discussion period, and resource packet. Participants also received an autographed copy of Dr. Hale's book, *Black Children: Their Roots, Culture and Learning Styles* which documents her curriculum.

Child Care Summit

On May 4, 1991, early childhood professionals who participated in the survey, other early childhood educators, and advocates attended an all-day Summit at Seattle Central Community College. The African American Child Care Task Force planned morning and afternoon workshops to address the eight major focus areas. The afternoon session featured sharing time for workshop groups, strategizing, networking, and evaluations.

Summit participants explored each of the focus areas in depth. Using the responses to the survey combined with information gathered at the Summit, Task Force members compiled summaries and recommendations for each area.

Community Forum

On June 19, 1991, individuals representing community, city, county, and state agencies, as well as the surveyed professionals were invited to attend a forum on African American child care. The issues identified in the Needs Assessment Project were discussed, and forum participants created a list of feasible strategies for implementing the Summit recommendations. Agency representatives also indicated specific strategies that they could accomplish.

SECTION III. THE SURVEY SAMPLE

The initial universe of programs included 50 licensed child care programs in King County in which African American children constituted at least 25% of the total population. These programs represented a variety of child care services in the community (i.e., center-based, family child care homes, and non-residential mini-centers). Interviews were completed with owners, directors, and program supervisors at 34 programs.

Program Type & Staffing

Among the 34 surveyed programs, there were 7 family child care homes, 23 centers, and 4 mini-centers. Eighteen (18) of the 34 programs have an African American director. Twenty-four (24) of the programs surveyed were nonprofit. Forty-one percent (41%) of the programs surveyed serve infants; 74% serve toddlers; 91% serve preschoolers; and 65% serve school-age children.

Almost all of the programs have a substantial percentage of children receiving subsidies:

- In 3 programs, 100% of the children served receive subsidies
- In 9 programs, 76-99% of the children served receive subsidies
- In 7 programs, 51-75% of the children served receive subsidies
- In 7 programs, 21-50% of the children served receive subsidies
- In 6 programs, 20% or fewer of the children served receive subsidies

Only 2 programs had no low-income families.

The number of staff per program ranged from 1 to more than 20:

- 12% (4 programs) have only 1 paid staff person
- 29% (10 programs) have from 2 to 5 staff persons
- 32% (11 programs) have from 6 to 10 staff persons
- 18% (6 programs) have from 11 to 20 staff persons
- 9% (3 programs) have more than 20 staff persons

There are a total of 307 paid staff at the surveyed programs, 269 of whom are female, and 38 of whom are male. Of the 307 staff persons, 162 of them are African American, 136 female and 26 male.

Children Served

The total number of children served in the surveyed programs is 1,682, of which 1,031 (61%) are African American. The number of children in various age groups in the programs participating in the survey are as follows:

- 55 infants, 30 of whom (55%) are African American
- 200 toddlers, 143 of whom (72%) are African American
- 907 preschoolers, 549 of whom (61%) are African American
- 401 school-aged children, 238 of whom (59%) are African American
- 119 children were unclassified

Of the families served, 569 were single-parent families; 468 were two-parent families; 32 had grandparents as primary caregivers; 31 were foster homes; 20 had teen parents; and 7 had other structures.

More than half of the children, approximately 992, were low-income and received some type of subsidy.

SECTION IV. FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Needs Assessment Project highlighted numerous issues concerning child care services for African American children in the areas of curriculum, parental involvement, discipline, staffing/staff development, self-esteem/cultural awareness, management/administration, environment/safety, and community resources. The findings in each of these issue areas were evaluated using NBCDI's "Safeguards" standards as a guide.

Thirty-six on-site interviews were conducted. During the interviews, it became apparent that there was a disparity in the resources and therefore the quality of programs with African American directors and large numbers of African American children as compared to other programs. The African American programs did not have the advantage of multiple funding streams, had lower salaries, and did not provide as many benefits for their staff. However, these programs were clearly more aware of the need to provide culturally relevant experiences. To illustrate such differences between African American and non-African American providers, the findings are given by race of the director.

Self-Esteem/Cultural Awareness

Definition

Interactions between children and staff are characterized by warmth, personal respect, individuality, positive support, and responsiveness. Recognition that all areas of young children's development -- social, emotional, cognitive, and physical -- are integrated.

Discussion

A commitment to learning through observation of the child's everyday behavior can help early childhood professionals gain insight into how the child feels about him/herself. The primary sources of self-esteem include: 1) the children's own experiences; 2) their ability to live up to expectations and goals set up for and by themselves; 3) other people's comments; and 4) their ability to evaluate themselves.

An important goal of early childhood professionals should be to help children learn to value and appreciate differences. Treating children of all races, religions, and cultures equally with respect does not necessarily mean everyone should be treated the "same." The philosophy of "same is equitable" is flawed and should, therefore, be countered with formal information promoting different but respectful treatment.

Findings

There does not seem to be much variation on how African American and non-African American directors feel they provide for the special needs of

African American children. Both groups give a high response to supplying the child's basic life needs such as food, shelter, clothing, nutrition, and health care (19% for non-African Americans, and 22% for African Americans). Non-African American directors also reported letting the child know that he/she is special (19%).

Responses from participants in the Child Care Summit Meeting indicated there is a strong need for appropriate, regular, and individualized communication between children and their child care providers.

Recommendations

- Recognize that self-esteem can be enhanced by meeting a child's basic needs, including positive cultural group identity.
- Mandate that educational institutions incorporate culture-specific/anti-bias curriculum courses as a requirement to obtain a certificate or degree.
- Require state licensers, child care subsidy program monitors, Head Start/ECEAP program monitors, technical colleges' on-site trainers, and Child Care Resources technical assistance personnel to have culturally specific training.
- Require early childhood professionals to obtain training to facilitate a working knowledge of African American children.

Parental Involvement

Definition

Parents are well informed about the program and are welcomed as observers and contributors. The word "parent" is used in the broadest sense possible. It includes grandparents, foster parents, and extended family members.

Discussion

Parental involvement is important both for children as well as parents -- children feel better and more confident with parental involvement, and parents feel they are expanding their contribution. It is a self-esteem booster to both parent and child. Parental involvement also helps children internalize that crucial link which should exist between school and home and between teacher and parent. Parents can become empowered through skill development and meaningful interactions with teachers, administrators, and site councils.

There is a clear need for ongoing communication between parents and early childhood professionals. The information that is communicated

should include the child's daily activities and should not be limited to times when there is a problem.

Findings

A written statement of policy and philosophy regarding parent involvement is available at some of the child care facilities. However, 50% of the facilities headed by non-African American directors had no such policy statement, and 17% of those headed by African American directors had none.

There was some variation in how African American and non-African American providers work with families and the level of parent involvement. All directors rely on a broad combination of work methods. They concentrate on parent volunteers (25%), informal talks with parents (25%), formal meetings with parents (19%), and parent committees (19%). However, in all methods where personal interaction was emphasized, there was a higher percentage of use among African American directors. African American directors also used field trips/celebrations (28%), fundraising (22%), and workshops (17%) more often.

Recommendations

- Develop statements of policy regarding parental involvement that specify the form, type, and frequency of interaction.
- Provide parenting classes, support groups, and information and referral services for parents.
- Establish mechanisms to ensure parental involvement in decision making.
- Empower parents to advocate for the needs of African American families in a formal way to decision-makers, funders, media, and other child care professionals.
- Encourage parents to volunteer in areas which value their strengths.
- Incorporate other forms of parental involvement such as after-hours projects, parent committees, and regular parent meetings.

Environment/Safety

Definition

The indoor and outdoor physical environment fosters optimal growth and development through opportunities for exploration and learning.

Discussion

To deliver quality care, appropriate materials, equipment, and facilities are needed. Adequate provisions must be made to prevent or address physical illness in children and to allow for the maximum safety of young children while learning and at play.

Findings

Both African American and non-African American directors expressed the same environmental needs -- separate rooms, more space, and materials and equipment -- in roughly the same percentages (ranging from 25% to 44%). All non-African American directors responded to the question concerning environmental needs and stated that change was needed, whereas only 89% of African American directors responded to the question, and 6% state that no changes were needed.

Approximately twice as many African American directors used books and stories, dance, language, music, food and clothing, staff or children, and pictures, posters, and photos to reflect an Afrocentric environment. Thirteen percent (13%) of the non-African American directors said they did nothing to reflect an Afrocentric environment, whereas none of the African American directors had this response.

Summit participants cited utilizing community resources as one strategy to expand facilities and make environments appropriate and culturally relevant.

Recommendations

- Establish a Facilities, Equipment, and Repair Fund for programs serving low-income children financed by United Way, City of Seattle, King County, the State of Washington, and other appropriate partners.
- Provide on-going training for professionals on creating quality environments for children in child care programs.
- Create an inviting, nurturing, colorful, and safe environment that features children's work and other pictures displayed at the eye level of children.
- Incorporate into the environment materials that reflect the culture of African American children.

Discipline

Definition

A systematic approach to obtaining a state of order based on the explanation and understanding of consistent, clear rules. The use of positive techniques of guidance, including redirecting, anticipation of and

elimination of potential problems, positive reinforcement, and encouragement rather than competition, comparison, or criticism.

Discussion

One of the desired outcomes in situations involving discipline is for the child to feel good about him/herself. A primary need indicated by both African American and other directors is to maintain a positive, calm, and patient demeanor to obtain positive results.

Findings

The discipline strategies of surveyed early childhood professionals tended to focus on time-outs, redirection, and telling the child what behavior(s) are expected. Of the 18 African American directors, 72% mentioned "time-outs" as a preferred approach to discipline, compared to only 19% of the 16 non-African American directors. Twenty-two percent (22%) of African American directors cited "redirection" as a strategy, while 38% of the non-African American directors indicated redirection. Two (2) African American directors said they do not exercise corporal punishment, and only one condoned corporal punishment, indicating "rare spankings or swatting." All of the non-African American directors indicated they never use corporal punishment.

Forty-four percent (44%) of African American directors made reference to the need for children to feel positive and good about themselves. While non-African American directors were concerned about the need for understanding in facilitating positive behavior, only one made direct reference to self-esteem in their response to the understanding and discipline question.

Participants in the Community Forum stressed the need for early childhood professionals to formulate and follow a plan. Role modeling, guidance, and enrichment of environment were cited as major needs.

Recommendations

- Provide continuing education and in-service training which incorporate developmentally and culturally appropriate practices as well as social and emotional development.
- Help children develop problem-solving and self-discipline techniques.
- Partner with parents to promote consistency in articulating expectations to children.
- Facilitate an understanding of the relationship between the structure of the environment and behavior.

Staffing/Staff Development

Definition

The program is sufficiently staffed to meet the needs of children and promote their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. The program is staffed by adults who understand child development and who recognize and provide appropriate care.

Discussion

Arguably the most important determinant of the quality of an early childhood education program is the caregiver. The creation of the entire learning atmosphere is largely dependent upon the teacher. Therefore, child care/early childhood education programs should employ highly trained individuals for these positions, and every attempt should be made to use experienced personnel.

Findings

The ability to obtain and maintain qualified, committed staff emerged as a major need among surveyed programs. Stability of staff has been defined relative to staff turnover in the previous year and the number of years that senior staff have been employed. Of those providers surveyed, 12 providers had lost no staff in the previous year; 5 providers had lost 10 staff persons; 3 providers had lost 5 staff persons; and 2 providers had lost 4 staff persons.

Staff training was another major need, with all of the directors indicating that training is important. Forty-four percent (44%) of African American and 38% of non-African American directors equated training with the ability to serve children better. However, 28% of the African American directors do not provide training for their staff, whereas all non-African American directors that have staff reported that they offer training.

Classes and workshops were the preferred type of training, with 94% of non-African American and 44% of African American directors providing these experiences. Conferences were offered by 25% of non-African American and 11% of African American directors, and in-service training was offered by 13% of non-African American and 17% of African American directors.

Thirty-eight percent (38%) of non-African American directors pay for training of staff, compared to 11% of African American directors. Only non-African American directors reported giving staff time off for training (13%), and only African American directors reported providing training only for the manager or owner (11%). Twenty-five percent (25%) of the non-African American directors mentioned having a time or place set

aside to share resource materials with staff, compared to 17% of African American directors.

Twenty-five percent (25%) of non-African American directors and 34% of African American directors mentioned factors besides training that add to the quality of services offered. Six percent (6%) of all directors stated increased salaries for their staff, 13% of non-African American directors mentioned dedication, and 1% mentioned diversity of staff. Seventeen percent (17%) of African American directors said that experience was critical, and 11% said that being a natural caregiver was also of great importance.

Recommendations

- Create a model for delivering training to African American child care professionals to include the following components:

  - Intensive outreach;
  - Systematic credentialing;
  - On-site training and/or training in accessible locations;
  - Provision for substitute child care personnel;
  - Flexible days and times; and
  - Curriculum design content to meet the cultural and cognitive needs of African American staff.

  The State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and Seattle Central Community College should work with BCDI-Seattle and the African American Child Care Task Force to create the model.

- Require culturally relevant/anti-bias training as a prerequisite for licensing or re-licensing of child care programs.

- Implement an Early Childhood Education Track leading to advanced degrees at the University of Washington.

- Recognize the expertise of experienced child care professionals by assisting them to access college and university programs that give credit for life experience.

- Urge the State Department of Social and Health Services to earmark funds for basic health coverage to child care professionals employed at sites serving a high percentage of DSHS-subsidized children.

- Advocate for equity of education and career advancement opportunities, salaries, and benefits for child care professionals serving

low-income children through fair and equitable reallocation of resources.

Management/Administration

Definitions The program is efficiently and effectively administered with attention to the needs and desires of children, parents, and staff.

Discussion The training and experience of directors is a major factor in the overall quality of program administration. Preferably, center directors should have at minimum a Bachelors degree in management or early childhood education or a related education field. Directors should have previous work experience in a child development program. Training in management and staff-parent relations should also be required.

Findings On the average, center directors had fifteen years of experience in the early childhood education field. They had acquired a variety of degrees including early childhood care and education, education, social work, masters in public administration, associate of arts in accounting, as well as certifications as child care specialists and Child Development Associate credentials (CDAs).

Further, all directors rated training highest when asked what would be most helpful in order to provide quality experiences for the children they serve. African American directors also noted the acquisition of equipment and materials in order to provide quality experiences for the children they serve.

Recommendations

- Establish mentoring programs -- through Child Care Resources -- to enhance the managerial expertise of program administrators.
- Increase access to management development and training programs by providing incentives and scholarships to administrators in sites serving predominantly low-income children.

Curriculum

Definition The curriculum encourages children to be actively involved in the learning process, to experience a variety of developmentally appropriate activities and materials, and to pursue their own interests in the context of life in the community and the world.

Discussion Curriculum should reflect all that experts know to be developmentally and culturally appropriate for young children: there should be a variety of

activities in which the children may choose to participate; routine activities should be built into the daily schedule; there should be flexibility to allow for spontaneity; the schedule should be well-balanced with provisions for both teacher- and child-oriented activities, taking into account the personality, interests, and varied strengths of individual children; and learning should be active, not passive.

Curriculum must be carefully developed to both incorporate a knowledge of African American cultural values and encourage active parent participation.

Findings

A significant variety of activities are routinely conducted by the early childhood professionals surveyed. Directors said in nearly equally large numbers (over 38%) that they offered: outdoor time, arts and crafts, and free play. Non-African American directors also mentioned other offerings which included: dramatic play, music, language interaction, and science. Twice as many African American directors mentioned reading/stories, and three times as many mentioned math and/or writing.

Although in smaller numbers, directors equally mentioned exercise/ movement, large and small motor activities, sensory activities, puzzles, videos, and television. Thirteen percent (13%) or less of the non-African American directors mentioned sewing/cooking, caring for animals, celebrations, quiet time, and swimming lessons. Only African American directors mentioned computer time.

Summit participants felt that the needs and learning nuances of African American children are not fully addressed by either African American or non-African American directors.

Recommendations

- Provide opportunities for nationally recognized African American early childhood education experts to present at conferences such as the local Association for the Education of Young Children.

- Emphasize activities, such as answering open-ended questions or learning through discovery, which lay the foundation for building higher-order skills. Also focus on activities which build the precursors to skills in science, math, language arts, and computer literacy.

- Expose all early childhood professionals to forms of training that include curriculum design and pedagogical skills that are appropriate for working with African American children.

- Ensure that the holistic needs of each child are met through frequent monitoring of classroom activities and periodic assessments of program goals. Parents, teachers, and administrators must all be involved in ongoing re-evaluation.

Community Resources

Definition

Staff is knowledgeable about and uses community resources -- including governmental programs, business initiatives, service organizations, and other professionals -- both as a supplement to the program's resources and as a referral source for parents.

Discussion

Governmental programs can fill an important role in enhancing early childhood education programs. For example, on the federal level, the Family Support Act, the Child Care and Development Block Grant, and the Head Start Reauthorization can potentially increase the quantity and quality of child care available to families. Early childhood professionals should be aware of their provisions so that they can 1) participate in such programs as state-administered child care locator services and nutrition assistance programs, 2) encourage wrap-around services and the coordination of programs and funding streams, as well as 3) inform parents of the benefits of the provisions of child care-related legislation.

In addition, nonprofit organizations, local businesses, and individual professionals within the community may be willing to assist the early childhood education program in a variety of ways. These include grants and contributions, in-kind donations of equipment or materials, and free or low-cost technical assistance to improve facilities or programs. Early childhood professionals should identify specific needs which can be addressed in this manner and actively seek out community resources to help meet these needs.

Findings

When asked what they would provide African American children if they could have everything they needed, non-African American directors focused on program improvements while African American directors focused on facilities improvement, materials, and curriculum. Non-African American directors would provide better materials (31%), staff training and development (25%), resources to enhance self-esteem (19%), and a better curriculum (19%). African American directors, on the other hand, stress materials (22%), curriculum (22%), and facilities improvement (17%).

African American directors spoke of a need for facilities and equipment to accommodate music, large motor movements, and other activities, as

well as a need for computers, food, books, instructional materials, records, tapes, and pictures. At the same time, African American directors refer to the need for African American role models, materials in black culture, African American volunteers, and health care.

Recommendations

- Develop a network of resources for families with a particular emphasis on the needs of African American families which can be accessed through their child care programs.

- Improve access to services and information provided by Child Care Resources through targeted outreach to African American directors.

- Advocate that King County and the City of Seattle create a Fund Developer position to secure government and business financial support for child care programs that serve large numbers of African American children.

- Create mentorships between African American child care professionals and the African American Child Care Task Force for the purpose of networking and sharing knowledge about community resources and training opportunities.

- Maximize comprehensive child care services to low-income African American children and families by ensuring that the recommendations contained in this Action Agenda are an integral part of the planning, policy, and programmatic early childhood education solutions being proposed by the following entities:

  Washington Association for the Education of Young Children
  Puget Sound Association for the Education of Young Children
  Child Care Directors Association of Greater Seattle
  Children's Alliance
  Child Care Resources
  Child Care Works
  Success by 6
  Washington State Child Care Coordinating Committee
  Washington State Office of Child Care Policy
  Washington State Division of Children and Family Services
  Washington State Department of Community Resources
  Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
  King County Department of Human Services
  Seattle King County Public Health
  City of Seattle Department of Housing and Human Services
  Seattle Public Schools

SECTION V. ACTION AGENDA

The African American Child Care Task Force and the BCDI-Seattle affiliate undertook this Needs Assessment Project to assess the current status of programs serving African American children and to obtain community recommendations for improvement. Four goals guided the implementation of this project:

1. **To identify needs and barriers to quality services** of those child care providers who serve significant numbers of African American children.

2. **To identify program strengths** on which to build quality early childhood services for African American children.

3. **To recognize exemplary early childhood practices** which promote the development of African American children.

4. **To empower members of the African American child care community**, individually and collectively, to specify the strategies which best nurture the development of African American children.

Through the activities conducted during Phase I of the Needs Assessment Project -- the Survey of Child Care Providers, the Curriculum Consultation, the Child Care Summit Meeting, and the Community Forum -- as well as through an examination of the principles embodied in NBCDI's "Safeguards," the Task Force and BCDI-Seattle have identified two agenda items of critical importance in the delivery of quality child care/early childhood education services to African American children in King County.

Agenda Item One

One of the major indicators of a quality child care/early childhood education setting is the maintenance of a stable, qualified, well-trained staff. As a result of the survey, the Task Force and BCDI-Seattle identified an urgent need to enhance the training of child care/early childhood education program staff. The early childhood professionals at the Child Care Summit stressed that it is imperative that they be able to obtain and maintain qualified, committed staff. One third of the programs surveyed experienced severe staff turnover problems over the past year. Survey and Summit participants described the unmet demand for more funds, culturally relevant training, and leave time for staff.

As a result of these findings, the first action agenda item is:

Expand training options for child care professionals and their staff to enhance the quality of the early childhood education/child care experiences of African American children.

Agenda Item Two

In Seattle, 25% of African American families face the stresses of poverty and managing a household with few resources. Approximately 59% of the children served by the child care programs surveyed live in low-income families. These families have a critical need for a broad range of services that include the traditional parent education and parent involvement activities as well as information and resources that will enable them to provide the most stable home possible. Desperately needed resources include access to housing information, health services, drug abuse prevention and treatment services, and job training and placement services.

Because of these urgent needs, the second agenda item is:

Develop a network of resources that will enable parents to receive the services they need in the areas of housing, health, economic self-sufficiency, food and nutrition services, parent education, and involvement in their child's early education.

Plans for Implementation

During Phase I of the Needs Assessment Project, the African American Child Care Task Force and BCDI-Seattle assessed the current status of programs serving African American children, obtained community recommendations for improvement, and developed a two-item Action Agenda. The dissemination of this report represents the conclusion of Phase I. The Needs Assessment Project will now enter Phase II: Implementation of the Action Agenda.

The decision was made to focus initially on two Action Agenda items to ensure that early successes can be achieved by our network of volunteer early childhood education advocates. Through carefully crafted strategies, monitoring, and vigilance, concrete change can be documented during the implementation phase of the Needs Assessment Project.

Support from the Foundation for Child Development will enable BCDI-Seattle and the African American Child Care Task Force to work in

collaboration to develop a 12-Month Strategic Implementation Plan for carrying out the recommendations contained in this report. There will be four primary activities:

1. **Coalition Building.** The African American Child Care Task Force and BCDI-Seattle will share this *Needs Assessment Report* with key players in the child care arena, including program administrators, governmental agencies, child advocacy groups, and others, to gain their support, input, and participation.

2. **Short-Term Strategies.** In coalition with other early childhood education/child care advocates, the Task Force and BCDI-Seattle will develop strategies to address the two Action Agenda items over the next year. Every effort will be made to identify specific, measurable, and achievable steps to ensure success in the short-term and build a firm foundation for longer range action.

3. **Long-Range Strategies.** The coalition will identify long-range strategies to address additional concerns which were raised or confirmed by the Needs Assessment Study. Steps will be devised to begin to make systemic changes in the delivery of early childhood education/child care services to African American children in Seattle.

4. **Organizational Structure.** The coalition will establish a committee structure and delegate specific responsibilities to each committee to ensure the efficient implementation of identified strategies.

As a result of this process, BCDI-Seattle and the African American Child Care Task Force will strengthen and expand the coalition of advocates and organizations concerned about early childhood education/child care in Seattle. African American children will be the ultimate beneficiaries.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Seattle Black Child Development Institute and the African American Child Care Task Force formed a working partnership to address the need for comprehensive child care services in our community. We gratefully acknowledge the participation of the following individuals, child care programs, and institutions who collaborated on the development of this Action Agenda.

Margaret Bland
Special Needs Coordinator
F.A.M.E. Head Start Program

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Early Childhood Educator
YWCA Child Care Program

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ABC's Daycare
Adeebas Playhouse
Alleas Baldwin Child Care Home
B-B's Daycare
Beacon Child Development Center
Cassie's Loving Care
Cherry Hill Childcare
Childhaven
Community Day School Association
Concord Children's Center
Creative Beginnings
Damascus Child Care Center
Denny Park Children's Center
First Step
Gentle Dragon
Happy Medium School
Holly Park Childhaven
Holly Park Community Day Care
Jeanette's Day Care Home
Kids Club
Denise Louie Early Childhood Education Center
Love's Nest Day Care Center
Martin Luther King Day Home
Mount Zion Preschool
Noah's Ark
Northwest Latchkey, Inc.
Our Place Daycare Center
Pauline's Day Care Home
Primm Day Care Center
Rainbow Learning Center
Seattle C.C.C. Child Care Center
Sheron's Day Care Home
Smiling Faces Daycare Home
Tall Cedars Child Care Center
YWCA Child Care @ WIAT
Zion Prep Academy

Institutions

City of Seattle Department of Housing & Human Services

Department of Social & Health Services
Child Care Licensors, Region IV

Seattle Central Community College

Mount Zion Preschool

East Cherry YWCA

A special acknowledgement goes to the Community Service Division of the King County Department of Human Services which funded the Needs Assessment Study of Child Care for African American Children and publication of this report as well as the ***Foundation for Child Development*** *which also supported the production of this publication.*

NOTES

ABOUT NBCDI

The National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI), founded in 1970, is dedicated to improving the quality of life for African American children and their families. NBCDI is the first national organization of its kind.

NBCDI focuses primarily on issues and services that fall within four major areas: health, child welfare, education, and child care/early childhood education. NBCDI monitors public policy issues that affect Black children and educates the public by publishing periodic reports and two quarterly newsletters, as well as convening an annual conference and other public education forums. The NBCDI affiliate network, comprised of hardworking volunteers from all walks of life, provides direct services to Black children and youth such as conducting tutorial programs, "helping children find adoptive" homes, and sponsoring culturally enriching programs and activities. For further information, please write or call NBCDI.

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Our children need your help. Contact Yvonne Ervin Carr, President, BCDI-Seattle
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